

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Favorable consideration of this application, as presently amended and in light of the following discussion, is respectfully requested.

Claims 1-20 are presently pending in this application, Claim 1 having been amended by the present amendment.

In the outstanding Office Action, the amendment filed November 24, 2008 was objected to under 35 U.S.C. 132(a) because it introduced new matter into the disclosure; and Claims 1-20 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Pitcher, Jr. (U.S. Patent 4,417,908) in view of EP 1 184 066 (hereinafter "EP '066).

First, regarding the objection under 35 U.S.C. 132(a), it is respectfully submitted that Figures 1 and 2 attached to the response filed November 24, 2008 is provided simply as exhibits for the purposes of illustrating the data on Tables on page 39, 43, 47 and 51 of the specification along with the discussions, *not as new drawings as a part of the disclosure*. It is believed that this is evident from the statement in the response that "Tables on pages 39, 43, 47 and 51 of the specification can be shown in the attached Figures 1 and 2 where the pressure losses upon collecting 6g/l of particulates are significantly low for the filters" Therefore, Applicants respectfully request that the objection be withdrawn.

Claim 1 has been amended herein. These amendments in the claims are believed to find support in the specification, claims and/or drawings as originally filed, for example, the specification, page 23, paragraph 67, and page 25, paragraph 74, to page 26, paragraph 76, and no new matter is believed to be added thereby. If, however, the Examiner disagrees, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned who will be happy to work in a joint effort to derive mutually satisfactory claim language.

Briefly recapitulating, Claim 1 as currently amended is directed to a columnar honeycomb structural body and recites "a porous ceramic block having a plurality of through

holes extending in parallel with one another in a length direction of the porous ceramic block, the porous ceramic block having a wall portion interposed between the through holes, wherein the through holes have one of ends sealed such that an opening area of one end face of the through holes is larger than an opening area of the other end face of the through holes, the plurality of through holes includes a plurality of large through holes and a plurality of small through holes, the large through holes have cross-section areas which are larger than cross-section areas of the small through holes, the large through holes and the small through holes are positioned such that a distance between centers of gravity of the cross-section areas of adjacent ones of the large through holes is set to be equal to a distance between centers of gravity of the cross-section areas of adjacent ones of the small through holes, the opening area of one end face of the through holes and the opening area of the other end face of the through holes have a ratio in a range between 1.01 to 6, the wall portion has a plurality of micro pores having an average pore diameter in a range from 5 to 30 μm , the micro pores include large micro pores having a pore diameter two or more times larger than the average pore diameter, and the large micro pores have a capacity of which a rate is set to 30% or less of a capacity of the micro pores in entirety.”

By forming such through holes (see attached Exhibit 1 for illustration, for example), the ceramic block disperses heat more uniformly throughout its structure during the regeneration process, thereby preventing heat being localized in a certain portion of the ceramic block and reducing thermal stress. As a result, the columnar honeycomb structural body exhibits superior durability free from cracks caused by thermal stress even after long term repetitive use.

It is respectfully submitted that neither Pitcher, Jr. nor EP ‘066 teaches or suggests “a porous ceramic block having a plurality of through holes extending in parallel with one another in a length direction of the porous ceramic block ..., wherein the through holes have

one of ends sealed such that an opening area of one end face of the through holes is larger than an opening area of the other end face of the through holes, the plurality of through holes includes a plurality of large through holes and a plurality of small through holes, the large through holes have cross-section areas which are larger than cross-section areas of the small through holes, the large through holes and the small through holes are positioned such that a distance between centers of gravity of the cross-section areas of adjacent ones of the large through holes is set to be equal to a distance between centers of gravity of the cross-section areas of adjacent ones of the small through holes, the opening area of one end face of the through holes and the opening area of the other end face of the through holes have a ratio in a range between 1.01 to 6 ...” as recited in amended Claim 1.

More specifically, EP ‘066 does not disclose through holes comprised of large through holes and small through holes. Also, not only does EP ‘066 describe a honeycomb structure in which the opening areas on the inlet and outlet sides are set equal and thus only weak force is exerted on the particles passing through the partition wall, but also it sets the same number of through holes (*i.e.*, cells) being sealed at two opposite ends, making the opening areas of the two end faces of the through holes equal. Thus, the structure recited in Claim 1 is clearly distinguishable from EP ‘066.

Pitcher, Jr. simply shows various structures in which the opening areas on the inlet and outlet sides are sealed differently. However, except for Figures 6, 16 and 17, the structures shown in Pitcher, Jr. do not have through holes comprised of large through holes and small through holes. Furthermore, in the structures in Figures 6 and 16, the distance between the centers of gravity of the cross-section areas of adjacent large through holes is different from the distance between the centers of gravity of the cross-section areas of adjacent small through holes, and in the structure shown in Figure 17, it is believed that the ratio of the opening areas of the two end faces of the through holes clearly exceeds 6.

Therefore, the structure recited in Claim 1 is believed to be clearly distinguishable from Pitcher, Jr.

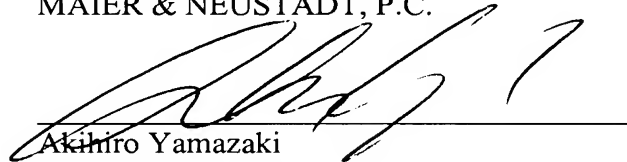
Because both EP '066 and Pitcher, Jr. fail to disclose the through hole structures as recited in amended Claim 1, even their combined teachings are not believed to render the honeycomb structural body recited in Claim 1 obvious.

For the foregoing reasons, Claim 1 is believed to be allowable. Furthermore, since Claims 2-20 depend directly or indirectly from Claim 1, substantially the same arguments set forth above also apply to these dependent claims. Hence, Claims 2-20 are believed to be allowable as well.

In view of the amendments and discussions presented above, Applicants respectfully submit that the present application is in condition for allowance, and an early action favorable to that effect is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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EXHIBIT 1

